

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1-19. (canceled)

20. (original) A method of treating the spine of a patient, comprising:

inserting an access device through an incision in the skin of the patient generally posteriorly until a distal portion of the access device is located adjacent the spine of the patient, said access device being inserted in a first configuration having a first cross-sectional area at the distal portion thereof;

actuating said access device to a second configuration having an enlarged cross-sectional area at said distal portion thereof that spans at least a portion of a first vertebra, a second vertebra, and a third vertebra;

placing a fusion device through the access device and in at least one of a first interbody space between the first and second vertebrae and a second interbody space between the second and third vertebrae;

performing a two level fixation procedure spanning the first and second interbody spaces through the access device;

advancing a decompression tool through the access device; and

removing a portion of bone from one of the first vertebrae, the second vertebrae, and the third vertebrae through the access device.

21. (original) The method of Claim 20, wherein the portion of bone removed comprises a portion of a facet.

22. (original) The method of Claim 20, wherein the portion of bone removed comprises a portion of a lamina.

23. (original) The method of Claim 20, further comprising placing a bone growth substance through the access device and adjacent at least one of the first interbody space and the second interbody space to enhance bone growth therebetween.

24. (original) A method of treating a spine of a patient, comprising:
inserting an access device through an incision in the skin of the patient generally posteriorly until a distal portion of the access device is located adjacent the spine of the patient, said access device being inserted in a first configuration having a first cross-sectional area at the distal portion thereof;

actuating said access device to a second configuration having an enlarged cross-sectional area at said distal portion thereof that spans at least a portion of a first vertebra, a second vertebra, and a third vertebra;

placing a fusion device through the access device and in at least one of a first interbody space between the first and second vertebrae and a second interbody space between the second and third vertebrae; and

placing a bone growth substance through the access device and adjacent at least one of the first interbody space and the second interbody space to enhance bone growth therebetween.

25. (original) The method of Claim 24, further comprising:
advancing a decompression tool through the access device; and
removing a portion of bone from one of the first vertebrae, the second vertebrae, and the third vertebrae through the access device.

26. (previously presented) The method of Claim 25, wherein the portion of bone removed comprises a portion of a facet.

27. (previously presented) The method of Claim 25, wherein the portion of bone removed comprises a portion of a lamina.

28. (previously presented) A method of treating the spine of a patient, comprising:
inserting an access device through an incision in the skin of the patient generally posteriorly until a distal portion of the access device is located adjacent the spine of the patient, said access device being inserted in a first configuration having a first cross-sectional area at the distal portion thereof;

actuating said access device to a second configuration having an enlarged cross-sectional area at said distal portion thereof that spans at least a portion of a first vertebra, a second vertebra, and a third vertebra;

placing a fusion device through the access device and in at least one of a first interbody space between the first and second vertebrae and a second interbody space between the second and third vertebrae;

performing a two level fixation procedure spanning the first and second interbody spaces through the access device;

advancing a decompression tool through the access device; and

removing a portion of a facet from one of the first vertebrae, the second vertebrae, and the third vertebrae through the access device.

29. (previously presented) A method of treating a spine of a patient, comprising:
inserting an access device through an incision in the skin of the patient generally posteriorly until a distal portion of the access device is located adjacent the spine of the patient, said access device being inserted in a first configuration having a first cross-sectional area at the distal portion thereof;
actuating said access device to a second configuration having an enlarged cross-sectional area at said distal portion thereof that spans at least a portion of a first vertebra, a second vertebra, and a third vertebra;
placing a fusion device through the access device and in at least one of a first interbody space between the first and second vertebrae and a second interbody space between the second and third vertebrae;
placing a bone growth substance through the access device and adjacent at least one of the first interbody space and the second interbody space to enhance bone growth therebetween;
advancing a decompression tool through the access device; and
removing a portion of a facet from one of the first vertebrae, the second vertebrae, and the third vertebrae through the access device.

30-32. (canceled)